DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 422 EA 013 173

AUTHOR Cusick, Philip A.
TITLE A Study of Networks Among Professional Staffs in Secondary Schools.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 80
CONTRACT 400-79-0004
NOTE 37p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Boston, MA, April 7-11, 1980). For a related document, see EA 013 155.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Freedom: *Classroom Communication: Ethnography: Networks: *Organizational Communication: Secondary Education: *Secondary School Curriculum: *Student Teacher Relationship: Teacher Role: Teaching Conditions

ABSTRACT

Using ethnographic methods, including participant observation and interviews, the researcher intended to study the network of relations among professional staffs of two comprehensive secondary schools in order to hypothesize about the effects of those networks on the curriculum. Neither school had a fixed four-year curriculum and both stressed responsiveness to students, which allowed teachers almost absolute control in planning course content. This situation resulted in isolated, autonomous teachers who created their own egocentric fields of influence in the classroom. A second, equally egocentric field was composed of teachers and students who responded to the same approach. A set of relations an individual teacher may have built with other staff members to protect his or her personal approach or to enrich his or her life formed a third field. The implications of the study are that too much autonomy among teachers may result in reduced effort and the failure to provide, both academically and socially, the rudiments of an education for poorly motivated students. (Author/WD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED197422

A STUDY OF NETWORKS AMONG PROFESSIONAL STAFFS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

BY

Philip A. Cusick
Michigan State University

This work was undertaken with the sponsorship of the National Institute of Education, Contract #400-79-0004.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. A. Cusick
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 013 173

AERA Conference, 1980

PURPOSE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain network of relations among the professional staffs of two comprehensive secondary schools and to hypothesize about the effects of those networks on the curriculum. The concept of "network" has been popular since Barnes used it to analyze social relations in a parish in western Norway. He defined a network as "a set of points, some of which are joined by lines. The points of the image are people or sometimes groups, the lines indicate which people interact with each other. We can think of the whole of social life as generating a network of this kind."[1]

The concept is useful for the social scientist trying to formulate an abstract idea of who interacts with whom in a particular place and how the characteristics and sum of the interactions affect behavior. It also may be useful for the individual in a specific place calculating his chances for extending his influence or gaining a desired reward. Both parties, the social scientist and the inside strategist, may be thinking of interactions, structure and influence, but with the different emphasis, there are two quite separate concepts. The former may be best expressed by retaining the term "network," the latter expressed as a "field."

> A network is defined as the totality of all units connected by a certain type of relationship. A network has definite boundaries and is not egocentric. It subsumes all the activity fields of the constituent units; or to turn this around, the activity field of each unit encompasses some portion of the total network....I would like to reserve the term field to indicate an egocentric system. A field may be delineated by social, economic, political or other type of relationships.....Thus an activity field of any given individual or group consists of all the units with which that individual or group maintains a certain type of relationship.[2]

While both meanings are concerned with structure and interactions, "field" specifies an egocentric entity, with a particular group or individual looking out from the

center, while network denotes the sum of the fields within a certain place or type of relationship. For this study it is a particularly useful distinction because our method was such that we began by exploring individual patterns of interaction, but our final emphasis was on the total network in each school.

A second important distinction concerns the importance of a "type of relationship" referred to above. What that author has in mind is using the term network with additional categorical concepts indicating type of relation and settings, e.g., social, economic, political, hence lodging the action in specific places and filling out the description and analysis. But what many social scientists have in mind when they use the term network is the structure, per se, with its characteristics serving as the independent variables affecting behavior. As such, the action is not situated or predicated on additional conceptual frameworks. No one denies that people are bound by types of meaningful relationships, e.g., family, group, community, but for these network researchers the emphasis is on the structural regularities and the effects of those regularities on behavior, not on the types of relationships within which the behavior takes place. These researchers "pay attention to the network...to the geometry of its arrangment, and not to the characteristics of things that net describes."[3] Their goal is to move beyond the concept of network as a mere metaphor by focusing on the ties in the structure, rather than the qualities of people, time and place. The alternative to their approach is the use of the term, network....

> ....as an eclectic bag of techniques for studying the details of individual variability around some basic ordering by categories and concrete organizations. We would like the reader to entertain instead the idea that the presently existing largely categorical descriptions of social structure have no solid theoretical grounding; furthermore network concepts may provide the only way to construct a theory of social structure.[4]

To these people the problem with social theory is that it remains wedded to categorical imagery and primitive terms such as role, group, society and status, and the relationship of these categories to the structure remains tenuous. For them it is not categories expressed in primitive terms, but structure itself that determines behavior. We agree that when the conceptual explanatory model is composed of primitive categorical concepts and structural, or in this case, a network concept, the imprecision of the former hinders an assessment of whether an individual piece of behavior can be explained in the social-psychological categories or by the structure. Such eclectic explanations do not assist in progressing toward greater precision and specificity.

However, the problem with this is not only that one's position in a structure may not be sufficient to explain his behavior but also

> tying mathematical definitions and postulates to structural constructs, while giving precision and power to the theory tend to oversimplify it. For reasons of mathematical convenience, one has to make simple assumptions which so restrict the theory that it may seem unrealistic compared to the complexity of observed human behavior.[5]

For that reason, while using relations and structures as explanatory models remains a goal, most network studies have been undertaken with field methods and have been of specific places such as factories, communities, families and the factory-ness, community-ness and conjugal-ness, as well as role, group and status serve as additional explanatory devices. While this reduces the power of the structural paradigm to explain the action, it does make the ensuing explanations more plausible. Such a strategy may not really move the term network beyond a metaphorical stage, but it is generally supported by the oft-quoted Barnes;

> There is no such thing as a theory of social networks; perhaps there never will be. The basic idea behind both the metaphorical and the analytic uses of social networks - that the configuration of cross-cutting interpersonal bonds is in some unspecified way causally connected with the actions of these persons and with the social institutions of their society - remains a basic idea and nothing more. It constitutes what Homans calls an "orienting statement" rather than a theory with preopositions that can be tested.[6]

In keeping with the view represented by Barnes, we used the concept of network in presenting the structure as more than groups and dyads, but less than communities or organizations. For purposes of interpreting and analyzing our data in the form of narrative descriptions of interactions, we brought in functional concepts and added school setting and community.

THE SETTING

We designed this study to describe and explain the networks of relations among the staffs of two large, comprehensive, secondary schools and to determine the effect of those interactions on the curriculum. We asked two questions: (1) What do staff people do together and, (2) what does what they do together have to do with the curriculum?

The study took place in two secondary schools in a northern metropolitan area. One school was in a large community on the northern fringe of the area, was distinctively suburban in character and served 1500 white students. The second was in the central part of a smaller industrial area and served 2,200 students, half of whom were white, half black. Both are comprehensive high schools designed to serve a diversified curriculum to a pluralistic constituency. The staff of sixty-eight teachers in one school and 101 teachers in the other were divided into academic specialties. In the first school, in addition to five periods of instructing, each teacher was to do supervisory duty in the corridor, lavatory,

cafeteria or study hall for one period and had one preparation period and one lunch period. In the second school, the day was only five periods long and began at 7:30. At 12:50 the students went home, there being no lunch, activity or cafeteria period. This five period day had been adopted in the sixties by many urban schools as a response to racial violence. Trouble occurred where the students were allowed to come together outside the class, e.g., cafeteria, study halls, activity periods, so those times were simply eliminated from the day. At 1:00 p.m. the only students left are the varsity athletes, a few seeking extra help or a few waiting in the lobby for a friend.

Both schools were organized departmentally. The department was an administrative unit in terms of scheduling and allocation of supplies and materials, but the chairperson had no supervisory authority relative to teachers, nor any more than a teacher relative to students. For that reason, while one enjoyed the benefits and the modest prestige, it was a limited position, held only at the pleasure of the principal.

Beyond the students, teachers and deparment chairmen, both schools were reasonably well staffed with administrators; two assistant principals in the first, three in the second, and of course, a principal. Into their offices came an unending stream of students, each with a request for a pass, a late slip, an early leave slip, some disciplinary problem, tardiness, insolence, ome altercation with a teacher or a student, a work or parking or physical checkup permit. Many of these required a follow up, a call to a parent, another teacher, the counselor or someone else in the organization. The administrators' working day consisted of this endless series of disconnected and isolated meetings.

The amount of administrative and supervisory time being spent attending to the needs of individual students helps emphasize an important point about both schools.

To the degree that either of these schools had an educational philosophy, its main tenet was that the school was designed to be responsible to individual students. In fact, the central tenet in the goals of the district of the second school was, "If children fail to develop and grow as we reasonably expect they should, the shortcomings or errors should be focused upon the structure of the system and the community, not upon the children...Children do not fail to learn, the school fails to teach." In the first school the philosophy, although less specific, was still the foundation of the structure. The school was designed to serve the student and give him or her as many opportunities as possible to attain an education. At least until it became dangerous to other students as it rarely did, or when the student rejected every opportunity, the administrators tried to keep the student in school. That schools are designed to be responsive to individual students meant that administrative time was spent on attending to individual students. So the administrators' time was not spent on program development, coordination, supervision or evaluation. It follows that not only did the administrators value more highly those teachers who could "get along with kids" and thus not burden the office with additional problems, but also that each teacher was more or less left to his or her own resources as to how to conduct himself in the classroom. It is this latter point from which we wish to begin our description of teachers and their networks.

FINDINGS

In this section, we will present, in an abbreviated form, some of the general description of teacher networks in the school. Our intent is to present an amount of information that is adequate to warrant the model which will be developed from the description. For purposes of this brief article, we will generalize freely to both schools and not try to trace the differences that existed. We are not saying that

are identical; one was large, urban and biracial, the other was smaller, suburban and white. However, the focus is on what teachers did together and how it affected the curriculum, and our contention is that this did not differ in either school.

So far we have described a setting and structure which embodied the basic patterns of most comprehensive high schools and the administrative efforts that were devoted to the all important tasks of attendance and discipline. We added a departmental structure, which was not much more than a loose confederation that existed to order and distribute supplies and assign classes, and a central office that was distant and busy with issues of a different nature. The sum of all this and the center of our proposed model is that the teachers in either school, after being given their scheduled assignments, were free to develop the pattern of accommodation and the approach to curriculum that suited them. Our task is to explain those accommodations in terms of fields and networks.

The accommodations were quite different. By different, we mean that one could find a way to teach which fits his own style, background, opinions, predilections, inclinations or whatever, and justify it in terms of being "good for kids." Some stressed writing, some personal relations and some deportment. Some assigned homework, some did not; some spoke to students in a teenage jargon, some held up formal standards of speech. Some put normative compliance into their jobs and made them the centers of their lives, others gave considerably less and put their involvement into their families, second jobs or avocations. There was no standard way to behave relative to the curriculum or the students.

Teachers emphasized what they wanted to emphasize. One who cared about philosophy created an elective course in philosophy and nurtured it to the point where he taught three classes of it each term. The philosophy that he taught was that

of Aristotle and Plato because that interested him. But it would have been equally acceptable for him to teach Locke, Berkeley and Hume. He did what he wanted to do. A social studies teacher who tried to develop a course on geography, which was his major, was not successful. Now, by his own admission he "gets a map into every social studies lesson he has" and in effect teaches geography. Another teacher taught social studies and was interested in the stock market. He developed two economics classes, the focus of which became reading and studying stock tables, purchasing stocks in a few local companies, studying the accompanying financial data, and, when possible, attending Board of Directors meetings. The stock profits were used for the trips, while the teacher absorbed the losses by re-purchasing the stock from the students. An English teacher loved music, put on musical performances and worked as a promoter for some local agents. He created an elective called "Music as Expression" where he played Bach, the Beatles, the Beach Boys, black street poets and all the music he liked. The program consisted of listening, studying lyrics and writing about those lyrics. He referred to his class as "relevant" and "interesting" and was proud of having the "most popular elective class in this school." According to him, the course "was what the kids related to and needed," and"in the music was an important message for that biracial school." While some other English teachers might quietly disparage "what he calls English" that was not sufficient to deter him.

There was a teacher hired to teach business math who had become interested in computers. He arranged a class in computer programming and begged or borrowed a keypunch and card sorter. He sold candy between classes to earn money for some small computers, four of which he purchased after two years. He arranged with the

central office to use its data processing equipment one afternoon a week and had his line into the large computer in the Intermediate District. In effect, he created his own curriculum in response to his own interests.

This last teacher was an interesting case because he exemplified what so many others did in combining different resources to support their classes. He contacted outside agencies for support, sold candy in school to raise the money, did his own installation and repairs, recruited theinterested students and convinced the administrators of the worthiness of the endeavor. He put together what appeared to be a very credible introduction to programming and in doing so gradually deserted his original assignment, which was to teach typing and business math.

This entrepreneurial approach to teaching or to the creation of curriculum was the rule, not the exception in those schools. A biology teacher was an avid outdoorsman so a good part of his classes was devoted to stream and wildlife ecology. An American history teacher in the second school was particularly interested in the Second World War in which he had served. He started a "war games" club, and with the funds that he and the students raised, bought some expensive games. Then he channeled the energy from the war games club into an elective class called "Second World War " which was subscribed for two sections.

This phenomenon of teachers individually creating the curriculum can be simply explained. In neither school was there a fixed curriculum that one took for four years. A student in either had to accumulate 14 credits in the tenth through the twelfth grades. Included in the 14 were a credit in math, one in science, three in English, one in U.S. History, one in social studies and one half in government. That meant there were six and one-half open credits, giving teachers room to create electives that they wanted. Even within the required courses there were a great

many ways one could fulfill the fourteen. One could take poetry, writing, speech, remedial reading, Shakespeare or grammar and composition, all of which could be counted as one English credit. The students were in fact free to choose from among a great many offerings to accumulate either their required or their elective credits.

The second impetus to this system was the general philosophy of the school that teachers had to get along and be responsive to kids for the entire day and the constraints of a structure that isolated teachers in their rooms where they were without contact from colleagues or scrutiny from supervisors. The way one "got along with kids" was to follow his own predilections and inclinations with assurance that unless there was trouble with students or worse, parents, his efforts would go unscrutinized. This combination of isolation from colleagues and hence collegial influence, the lack of scrutiny, the necessity of "getting along with kids" and an open elective system where teachers had to appeal to students, encouraged a situation wherein one was expected to create an individualized approach with which he and his students were comfortable. This is the basis of our argument that what most influenced the curriculum of either school was not some formal organizational arrangement or set of collegial understandings, but the teacher's individualized field from whence came his or her approach.

Most of those mentioned give normative compliance to the school, put a great deal of time and effort into teaching and take teaching as their sole occupation. But, of course, not everyone behaved that way. A number of teacher raised families, ran private businesses, worked for other companies, did part-time skill work or had a serious avocation that was, at least in part, run for profit. In addition to those outside jobs, there were an equal number of inside jobs. Many teachers coached, served as department chairmen, worked or taught co-op, taught evening school, served as system wide department chairmen, worked as athletic or activites directors or did extra work for the athletic departments.

This phenomenon of teachers having two jobs is not much discussed in educational literature but we believe it to be important and quite capable of affecting the curriculum. Since our argument is that the strongest force in the curriculum is the teachers' individual field, then a time consuming and serious job can be a powerful influence on the curriculum, particularly if it infringes on school time.

That some teachers conducted second jobs on school time demonstrates the potential freedom any single teacher has in the schools, a freedom to proceed in his classes without interference from colleagues or supervisors. One could, in effect, follow his own predilections, taking his cues from whatever constituted his relevant field. One's approach to teaching was not developed or carried on within a formal or collegial network; rather it sprang from one's own relationships, his background, personal opinions, outside constraints and whatever. We do not have a suitable word for it, so will use the term "field."

One of the questions we always asked teachers was, "How do you decide to do what you do in the classroom?" They would usually begin by citing the department approved texts, but invariably the differences of opinion as to how to handle classes and what to emphasize would emerge. The differences came from a whole host of background elements in the individuals' lives. The teacher of philosophy talked philosophy all the time. He had a strong Catholic background, read philosophy in his spare time and had strong opinions about the importance of taking his "examined life" perspective into his students' lives. His field included his background, his church ties, likes, opinions, education, experience, and personal way of relating to students. All were combined into his classroom approach. The source was not the structure or contacts within the school, save that they were sufficiently uncompelling as to be unable to offset his own field. A French teacher in the first school took over French III when it had three students and, with hard work, built it up to have

twenty-three students, a noteworthy enrollment in an advanced foreign language class. She teaches a sixth hour of French IV, takes the students to Quebec, takes as many as she can to France, has a club that goes to French restaurants in the area, has French dinners for the club in which all the students cook French-style and speak French during the evening and spends her evenings studying and reading for her class. When asked why, she replies, "Because I want to make French an exciting place. I want the kids to say, 'French is a good subject to take; it's fun and exciting.' I want it to be the best class in the school." "But why," we ask. "Because I want them to love French, etc." Always when we pushed the question of why to these teachers who by their own admission and the admission of other teachers and administrators give a great deal to the school, the reply was that they do it because they want to. The particulars of their approach to curriculum come from their own background, in or out of school.

The biology teacher was the state president of a conservation society and hunts and fishes all the time, often with students and former students. He takes his interest in forests and streams into the classroom. Everything came together for him; his interest in biology, avocations, public service, teaching and liking of students. His main life interests all meshed into his teaching. To the question, "Why do you what you do in the classroom and take the approach you take?" he would verbally construct this egocentric field where teaching as he taught was extended from and intertwined with a host of other elements in his life.

A serious and well respected speech teacher was a good example. He was assigned to the English department, taught speech and ran the debate club into which he put the kind of time and commitment that is typical of dedicated debate teachers. But his approach to his speech classes was unique. Students were obligated to give

three or four speeches a term, one on their academic life, one on their future, and two on something else. But the teacher was most proud of the fact that students got up and talked about the most difficult events in their personal lives. He was proud of "this little white girl who talked about how she babysat for this neighbor who raped her repeatedly over a period of six weeks and how she was afraid to say anything about it because he threatened her...and you should have seen those black kids respond to her, and those black boys telling her that if he tried to do anything like that again just to tell them and they'd 'Fix him.'"

When he spoke of his efforts to teach "an English elective for kids who can't read " he was pleased with their openness with one another, of the affection that came through to one who had told of his or her plight, of how his elective was one of the best subscribed classes in the school, of how though he was white, his clientele was almost entirely black "except for a few strong whites," and how what the kids needed most "was someone who understands where they're coming from and who can talk to them."

The content of his classes was only tangentially speech or forensics; rather, it was an elucidation of the students' lives, or as he put it, "where the kids are at." That was his major goal: to get them to articulate their lives, particularly the seamier side, and empathize with one another, particularly across the racial barrier. In his opinion, that was the way to teach school to "these kids."

From this gentleman and others who took an equally unique approach to curriculum, we tried to get an answer to the question, "Why do you stress this rather than any number of other things?" His answer was stated in terms of belief that "this is important," "this is where they're at," "this is what they need," "this is what

they relate to," "this is good for kids." "I'm getting them ready for life." Another teacher had spent some considerable time and energy organizing a set of activities to raise money for a girl stricken with a kidney disease. When asked why he did it he replied, "If a need like that isn't what we're here for, I don't know what is." Of course, no teacher ever subjected his beliefs to faculty consensus. Each made simple statement of his or her own values concerning students, schooling, and his or her own role in the process. No one, of course, knew whether students "really" needed this or that particular approach. Indeed there was no mechanism to even address the question. Any particular teacher might just as well have been doing what she or he "really" needed as well as what the students "really" needed. All that mattered in the sense of justifying one's approach was a set of students from whom the particular approach elicited an acceptable response.

It may appear that we have gone too far in stressing the uniqueness of each teacher's approach. Both schools had an established curriculum, and both had a set of procedures for altering that curriculum. One had an assistant principal for curriculum, and if one wanted to initiate a new course, then he went to that person with the idea, further developed the course with that principal's cooperation, and depended on the principal to work that course into the curriculum. In the second school there was a building department structure, a system-wide department structure, and a curriculum committee run by the director of secondary education. A new offering, a change in texts, or the removal of a course went through a process that might take some months and received careful scrutiny, particularly from the system-wide curriculum committee. And too, the schools were allocated a certain number of teachers based on the number of students. It was then the principal's task (in one school)

or the assistant principal's (in the second) to schedule the curriculum with what staff was available. These procedures were fairly orderly, and from our observation, were well followed in both places.

However, even with these formal procedures, our point still stands. While the curriculum in either school may be referred to as "standard," there is really nothing standard about it. Beyond the basic subjects which teachers also approach freely and with little supervision or collegial advice, the curriculum is a compilation of all the diverse efforts of individual teachers, past and present. That this curriculum stands published does not mean that there is some system-wide rationale or even school-wide collective understanding or its general appropriateness or the appropriateness of any single part. Any change, any innovation still came from individuals following their own predilections. The energy that altered the curriculum was always generated from one person, not the structure. If no teacher wanted to change something, neither the curriculum committee nor that assistant principal took the initiative. That was dependent on individual teachers. A second reason for the diversity was the lack of coordination, control, supervision or standardization. If a course is entered into the curriculum, years could go by, and no one would ever ask "what is happening in that class?" While there was the appearance of some curricular uniformity, the real basis of the curriculum was the individual teacher following his or her egocentric predilections. In neither school was there any compulsion to work together to formulate a uniform approach to teaching, or a standard way to relate to students, or some opinion as to what was or was not acceptable behavior for either students or teachers.

This is the main reason why we changed the purpose of the study. Originally we stated that "the purpose of the study is to describe and explain the human networks that intervene between the stated and pursued goals of two secondary schools, and the activities, instructional and otherwise, that take place as a

result of those stated and pursued goals." The problem was that that depended on there actually being some goals and some process by which these goals were worked through the faculty, and some result of the goals and the working through. But events did not work their way through the faculty, not things that were curricular or programmatic. The schools did not operate that way. The sum of the forces we have discussed, the schedule, the lack of supervision or , we might better say, the taking up of supervisory time with student discipline, the isolation of teachers in the classroom, the lack of common values among teachers regarding student behavior, achievement, appropriate educational goals, standard opinions of curriculum, or what was "good for the kids," combined to fragment the consensus. Yet, at the same time, no force served to build consensus. To build consistent consensus would have required purposeful activity, teacher recruitment with value consensus in mind, a great deal of time and effort and perhaps a less diverse environment, none of which were available. So the teacher was free to go off, build his own approach to classes and curriculum, his own way of relating to students, and was then free to justify it in his own terms. That the school looked more uniform than it was, was a function of the schedule, the room arrangement, and the requirements that one take some sequence of courses. But underneath that very thin uniformity was a great amount of diversity; correspondingly, there was no mechanism to create uniformity out of that diversity.

At one point in the study we wanted to say that the teachers all liked the students, or at least, they said they did and that this "liking" served as the main motivator. But it is not that simple. While they spoke of the generalized "kids," they always meant a very select set of individual students for whom they worked and from whom they evoked the kind of response they wanted.

In fact each teacher had two important fields. The first was composed of that interpersonal and egocentric set of forces from which one created his approach to teaching and students. The second was composed of a set of students--real students, past or present, for whom his or her particular approach worked. Some spoke of the academically inclined, some of the poorer and/or less able, some of those who left school and were doing well in college or in the community. Some spoke of those who had become genuine friends, or who reminded the teacher of herself or himself at a younger age. Each maintained some "set of students," for whom his approach worked, who responded affectively to him and who, in effect justified his or her unique approach to the job. The second level of "field" justified the first level of field.

Teachers and Teachers

We have not yet described what is the subject of most network studies, that is the interactions of participants, in this case teachers and teachers. While our assertion is that it is not the interpersonal networks as much as the egocentric fields that one has to study if he is to understand the curriculum, there are many opportunities in school for teachers to interact. When talking about teacher and teacher, we have to sift through innumerable interactions and try to winnow out those that seem to have something to do with school as an educational organization. We tried to observe and record those interactions that were stable and enduring, assuming that their stability and endurance were evidence that they serve some purpose.

First, of course, is the departmental structure. Within the departments people teach in proximity to one another, share the same office, decide on texts and supplies

and arrange schedules. All of this led to innumerable interactions and for many the department was the strongest source of personal and professional ties. But it had definite limits. The department chairman did not supervise or evaluate, nor did he or she enter one's classroom uninvited. Within a department it would not do to openly comment on or criticize another's style or choice of materials or challenge one's opinion on some pedagogical matter. While an important source of coordination and socialization, the departments did not pass beyond the corridors into the classrooms.

There was a good example of this in the first school. There was a district-wide attempt to have the English department in the four high schools address more directly grammar and composition for freshmen and sophmores. The program, which was in its third year, was originated and pushed through by the district-wide English chairperson and two department chairpersons, one of whom was in our school. It provided not only guidelines for instruction but also a fairly elaborate series of pre and post tests. But after three years, the district director of secondary education, busy with the building and with hiring, paid little attention to it. The building principal paid no attention to it and had never inspected the elaborate testing program. The people who initiated it were no longer in coordinating positions, two of them having become administrators. Two of the English departments in other high schools paid almost no attention to it, and its use and implementation was being more and more left to the discretion of individual teachers. In effect, some interested people created it and pushed it as far as they could. Then when they left or lost interest, it remained but in name only.

In other departments it was not much different, except in Social Studies or P.E. for some people who wanted it that way. These were fairly new social studies teachers who shared materials, shared ideas for their classes, attended after hours events and showed a high level of interest in student activities. One coached cheerleaders, another pom pom girls, another sponsored an activities assembly to raise money for a stricken student, and all were active in other events. As teachers who actively pursued their own interest, one had started a course in international relations, another several courses in sociology, another a course in psychology, each developing his class, recruiting his students and working it into the curriculum.

When the department chairperson and some other members of the department did not support their efforts to increase electives, they simply went around them and had their courses approved by the principal. When their efforts at recruiting students for their advanced electives resulted in one member of the department being left with five classes of ninth grade civics, then that was too bad. That person rallied against the system which apportioned classes unfairly, but he had done nothing to protect himself.

When a teacher whom the advanced biology teacher did not respect was assigned to teach elementary biology, he went to the principal and argued that the department did not want that individual. But when in that same department the chairperson wanted some cooperation for a departmental inservice, that

same biology teacher refused to cooperate and refused to attend the agreed upon activity. When he wanted to use the department to protect his biology, he used it. When it was inconvenient, he ignored it with impunity. When the coaches wanted increased supplies, they went to the department chairperson and argued as a department; when there was an attempt to get them to participate in a departmental inservice designed to add some skills to their repertoire, they stayed in their men coaches' locker room all morning. The department, as an entity, was extremely weak relative to the strength of individual fields.

As we stated, there were stable and purposive interactions all over those schools between teacher and teacher, and these purposive interactions were intended to extend and protect the field of each individual, but, at the same time, were not allowed to intrude upon that field. Our model is composed first of a background field from which stems one's approach to the task of instructing students; a second field is composed of the teacher and some students, for whom that teacher's approach is considered to be "good," and finally, a third field, or network, composed of the teacher and his colleagues, which one joins in order to create, extend or protect the initial field. There are two types of this third entity. The first is composed of those interactions which represent an undisguised attempt by a person to build a support system for his activity. The second consists of informal interactions in which teachers take genuine pleasure in one another's company. Over the course of their interactions the informal associations themselves become an important part of one's field. As an example of the former type we might cite the newspaper sponsor who purposively cultivated the principal and the activities director, an individual in the central office who had access to some copy machines, and another teacher who helped her students with camera work, all of whom she needed in order to sustain her newspaper. For an example of the

second type, we could cite a group of males, two teachers, one guidance counselor and an athletic director, who went out to lunch every day and had been doing so for years. The friendship and camaraderie that went with that lunchron were important elements in their professional lives and were actually the reason that two of them had stayed working in that school. For the former, we can indicate the yearbook sponsor, who cultivated the principal, cultivated the activities director, and a vice principal for support and thus built a network to protect her yearbook. For the latter, we may indicate the group of men in the office adjacent to the industrial arts area who liked each other, who in the fashion of long time associates discussed one another's personal lives, who drank together on Friday and fished and hunted together, who helped one another build a garage or pour cement or finish basements. For them regular association, every morning before school, every fifth hour every day, and every Friday evening, was important to having a satisfactory life in that school. We can include in the former those few teachers such as two coaches who created and team taught a course in fitness for varsity athletes. That was one of the few instances of cooperation in the curriculum, but it was still their own personal initiative and energy that created and sustained this successful class.

While we have not yet moved beyond the idea of egocentric circles, there are individual who have not one set of support colleagues but many, because their in-school field is more active and complex. W. sponsors an activity and coaches, so he associates with the athletic director and others. He initiated a new class, so he seeks out the principal; socializes with other teachers, so he attends the Friday sessions in the bar; and, in addition, he was brought up and lives in the community. Because of his involvement he is sought out in turn by the activities director for assistance on another activity, by the principal to serve on a committee and by the athletic director for extra

work if he wants it. He has not one set of colleagues but many sets all over the school. His is a complex social environment. Another teacher was hired to teach one class of physical science, chemistry, and some ninth grade science, but decided that he preferred physical science. Through working on the class, recruiting more students, and garnering the support of the principal, he now has one class of chemistry and four of physical science. But he has no friends in the school, is on no committees and attends no more than two evening activities a year demanded by the contract. For him the school is considerably less complex. But the same principle holds. Both teachers moved into the social life of the school and created networks of relations in order to enhance their fields.

All these internal groups and associates were individually created for personal reasons, not structurally maintained or rewarded. Membership in any one was open and voluntary. One could as well join in the 4th and 5th hour euchre club in the lunch room, as he could the group in the industrial arts area, the teachers in the non-smoking lunch session, the special ed teachers group, the group in the bar on Friday afternoon, or one could, even were he not a coach, make the men's PE office his hangout if he liked and wanted to talk sports, or he could create his set of support people whom he needed for his favorite project. All of the associations were fluid and non-exclusive, open to any one who availed himself, wanted to join and would take part regularly. If one chose not to join this or that set, or none at all, he or she received no sanction. Associations designed for curricular ends and those designed for non-curricular ends shared the common genesis and existed because someone cared to exert the effort and engage in the activity.

It was never the case that membership in one of these entities affected membership in another.

An individual may be a member of a department, a lunch or card group and a coach of some sport, but none of what he does in one, related to or affected what he did in another. The school then was composed of serialized and segmented sets of interactions, individually and purposefully initiated and maintained to fulfill some personal need, either to extend one's teaching approach or provide a fuller life. These associations were open and accessible, and membership in one did not preclude or affect membership in another, nor were they allowed to intrude into one's own way of dealing with students and teaching. In fact, in none of those informal or formal sets was there ever any generalized discussion of or search for consensus on the best way to deal with students.

Now this certainly constitutes a network, but a certain type of network. A network implies a certain amount of cross-membership with associations of one kind implying associations of a second kind. We did not find that. What characterized the associations, both those that were purposively designed to extend one's field, or those that were designed to fill out one's personal life, were all isolated from each other. One might be a member of two or more, but there was no overall pattern to help one predict from knowing membership in some groups to predict membership in other groups. For that reason, we characterized the teacher network as a segmented set of discrete, single purpose entities.

For the principals of either school, the place was composed of this set of relationships, but for them, the relationships were not discrete. The principal, because he administered the schedule, additional assignments and unallocated resources, controlled just those things that many teachers wanted in order to fill out their fields. He could award a department chairpersonship, a free first, fifth or eighth hour, a favorite class, a double lunch period, an honors section or support for a new activity. Particularly in the first

school, to the degree that he could within the bounds of the contract, the principal awarded those to people who, in return, gave him support with his job. What he wanted most was for teachers to enter into the spirit of the school and support its diverse activities and events. After all, he was in the position of having to demonstrate to a paying public that the school was a viable entity, and the evidence for that consisted of the diverse and interesting projects that individual teachers had initiated. The gifted program, a winning team, a quality newspaper, an innovative science program, a good debate club or a well attended senior play were the items that made good public relations and pleased the public and the central office administrators.

So the principal valued most highly those teachers whose activities assisted him with the all-important task of presenting that building in a favorable light to the public. In addition there were innumerable times when he needed additional help with some event, and he valued and attempted to reward the people who would respond to a call for help at a football game or dance or help sponsor some lesser activity. It was with those people that he entered into a quid-pro-quo relation, attempting to help them with their favored project in exchange for support on his projects.

Given the limits of dealing with a tenured, contracted, mature faculty, many of whom had as much of their energy allocated to outside activities as to the school, he really did not have very much in the way of power or rewards to dispense. He could neither hire nor fire, promote nor demote, pay more nor less, give fewer nor more than the contractually agreed upon number of classes. What he could do was support their private versions of the job, and he did it in exchange for cooperation

with his pet projects. We could understand the criticisms from those who said he "played favorites," but as he saw it, he was using what little he had to create some semblance of unity from this set of vastly disparate endeavors.

From his position, and to some extent for the activities or athletic directors, the word "network" meant something. They were involved in numerous activities and what occurred in one would affect what occurred in another. But for the others on the staff, there remained their private fields and what forays they made into the social interaction of the school did not go beyond their individual interests.

It was interesting to speculate that if one were willing to do just as the contract stated, and wanted no extra funds or the better classes or any favored schedule or free first or eighth hour, if one were content with fifth period cafeteria duty and five classes of ninth grade general math or civics, neither the principal nor anyone else could have any power relative to him. But if one wanted more than that and everyone whom we met did, then he or she had to enter into the general social arena of the school and cultivate what relationships were necessary in order to get what he or she wanted.

This was less true of the second school with its straight five period day and a lack of funds which denied many of the extra activities, sports, clubs, trips, where there were few opportunities for carving out a favored position. But there, in particular, there was a great deal of talk about the "old days" in the "old school" when people supported each other, when they attended events together and went beer drinking afterwards, when they ate together and socialized and knew each other's children. There were still strong friendships, hunting and fishing expeditions and a year end corn party, but because of the severe nature of the finances, there were fewer opportunities for interaction in the school. People there were even more likely, when they finished talking about the "old days," to leave by themselves for

their distant homes, their families and whatever activities they maintained outside.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In this field study, we attempted to trace out the networks among the teaching staffs in two comprehensive secondary schools and determine the effects of those networks on the curriculum. From the data, we constructed a theoretical model which dichotomized the term "network" into (1) an egocentric field and, (2) a network, or sum of all the staff relationships. The model suggests that the most important element in the construction of curriculum is the individual teacher's personal field from which he or she constructs an approach to students and teaching. There is a second, equally egocentric field composed of those teachers and some students who respond to that approach, and finally, a set of relations that one may build with other staff to either protect that personal approach or to enrich one's life. This third aspect is also egocentric except for someone like the principal who has to consider the effects of an action on a number of personal fields. At that point one may think in terms of a network. From a functionalist perspective, one could suggest that those staff members behaved that way in a system which left them unsupervised but in the company of students for almost the entire day with the principal requirements being that they "get along with kids." In response they developed these personal approaches to teaching and the aggregate of these approaches was the basis of the curriculum. In sum, we characterized the network structure as composed of highly diverse, segmented and egocentric fields.

While from this descriptive study of only two schools we have to be careful about implications, it is in order to generate thoughtful conjectures that one undertakes such a study. Therefore there are a few implications we would like to discuss.

The most serious are the questions that this study raises about the position of the organization relative to the individual. Given this study it is hard to understand why so many critics insist that our secondary schools are either "monolithic or sterile" (save in a certain drabness of architecture) and why there are continuing efforts to get schools to further release control of students.[7] In the first of these schools one could choose from among 168 courses, in the second, 250. In addition, each school offered co-op, work study, independent study, experimental programs, night school, shared programs with the local community college, special education and an area career center for additional vocational training. In the first school, half to two-third of the juniors and seniors left as early as fifth period (10:45 a.m.) to go to their paying jobs; in the second everyone went home at 12:50.

Given the emphasis on satisfying individual student needs, the elective system with few standard requirements and the numerous ways that even those few were kept unstandard, the absence of supervision by administrators or colleagues, the strict attention to student rights and the following of quasi-legalistic procedures for solving disputes, it seems to us that both the school administrators and the schools as collectives long ago gave up any suggestion that it is their role to decide on curricular matters and simply turned the responsibility over to individual teachers and students, allowing each to follow his or her own predilections.

It follows that the strength of the institution is left dependent on individual teachers offering quality programs to interested students, the teacher subcontracting his assignments, the students subcontracting for their education. It appears to be just that way, at least in these two schools. But there are at least two problems with it. The first is that while the autonomy that teachers enjoy may encourage a very high effort from some, any given individual may retain his job for years while doing little and putting his efforts into other endeavors. For those students who

are either motivated and mature or who have some firm adult guidance, there is a quality education to be had in either school. But there is nothing to prevent those who lack the sophistication, maturity or guidance from slipping through the system without even the rudiments of an education. One confronts such a system on his own, be he teacher or student.

A second and related problem is the neglect of the school collective as an educative entity. One might consider Durkheim's view that the school's important function is to prepare the child for social responsibility and that is done by creating a school atmosphere in which one is expected to restrain his individual passions in favor of the collective good, live up to some fairly clear norms of behavior and achievement and thereby learn the habits of social responsibility. The important element is not the development of an individual according to his or her needs but the school as....

> ...a social means to a social end--the means by which a society guarantees its own survival. The teacher is society's agent, the critical link in cultural transmission. It is his task to create a social or moral vein. Through the teacher, society creates man in its image. That, says Durkehim, is the task, the glory of education. It is not merely a matter of allowing an individual to develop in accordance with his nature, disclosing whatever hidden capacities lie there only waiting to be revealed. Education creates a new being.[8]

Not only would Durkheim's school be better equipped to teach the virtues of moral and social responsibility, but the collective ethic would serve as an added incentive for individual effort. Rutter et al. in their study which suggests that teachers and students are likely to work harder and achieve more in schools where there is a collective agreement on appropriate behavior and collectively enforced standards, affirmed what private school advocates have long known: that it is hard to justify a demanding curriculum to a student when one's only argument is based on a

utilitarian individualism. One has no answer to the student who in response to a difficult task asks, "Why should I?" if both the teacher and student understand that it is only that "I" that counts. But when both teacher and student understand that "This is the way we behave here," the question is less likely to be asked. In sum, it seems to us, that while in either of these two schools there were some very high quality efforts by teachers, and hence some excellent opportunities for aggressive students, this study raises serious questions about the neglect of the school collective as either a motivating, rewarding and supporting entity or as a pedagogical means to teaching social responsibility.

METHODOLOGY

The method elected for this study was a combination of participant observation and interview. Field or ethnographic methods have been increasingly considered legitimate for use in educational research, and therefore we do not feel obligated to resort to a lengthy explanation and justification of the theory. There are a number of methods for answering questions about human issues, and the task of the researcher is to select one or some combination that is compatible with the logic of the question. Our logic is very simple. In going about their business, the staffs of secondary schools carry on school-related and non-school related interactions with one another in the lounge, halls, faculty offices and everywhere else in the schools. This constant exchange is purposive to the running of the school and their own professional lives and much of the business of the institution can be said to pass through it. As an entity, it warrants serious study.

The processes of the method extend from this line of thought. Any notion of describing "total network" of interactions or even the "total field" of one person is futile. The number of possible interactions, past or present, real or imagined, which go on in any setting and are capable of being considered "significant," is simply unlimited, so an attempt to simply record them indiscriminately is virtually useless. But the participant observer, by virtue of his presence in the situation is able to make judgements about the relevance and thus discriminate the important from the trivial. "In many ways, the best information is likely to be obtained through direct observation. The observer, over a period of time is able to make his own assessment of interaction of an individual with others around him to record its characteristics." [9]

The shortcomings of the method are obvious. On many points the data are incomplete either because important actions go unobserved or unrecorded, or

because the actions are predicated on relations to which the researcher has no access. Then, too, not all of the staff of either institution were contacted by the researcher with the same degree of intensity, and indeed in one site the size of the second school was such that not all of the staff were contacted. But when one does such a study, he must decide in the beginning how to conduct himself. There are always discrete sets, groups and cliques in any place and when one enters he has to decide whether to join with one or more of these, in effect nesting in some subgroup(s), or to continually float through the system touching first one group, then another, then another and so on. Our choice is always to nest, but it does have its disadvantages. The first is that if one spends more time with a few, he is spending less time with many. The second is that these groups and cliques and sets have their own norms and behaviors, and once one is permitted to join, he must respect and abide by those norms. This too may and usually does, further separate him from many others whom he would like to contact. But in our experience "nesting" is always preferable, except when the research question plainly discourages it. It gives one an access to the deeper life and the meaning of behaviors of the institution, so that even if one is more reliant on inference to describe other parts of the setting, then that inference is more plausible. To know a few people well and to share their understanding of life in that place is superior to knowing many people only peripherally.

These two shortcomings, that one is limited to things that take place in his presence or that people tell him about, and that once in an institution, he is bounded by the mores and behaviors of certain subgroups, lead directly to the most oft-cited objections to the method, that it is overly subjective and provides too limited a base for generalization. We admit the conditions

but not the consequences. That it can be overly subjective is not a criticism of participant observation as much as a criticism of method in general. Should one establish his research on an erroneous premise, ask a question such that any possible answer furthers his own interest, develop an initial explanation containing an unrecognized tautology, then any resulting conclusion, regardless of method will be overly subjective. The problem lies with methods of social inquiry in general, not only with ethnographic methods. The second criticism, that it provides too limited base for generalizations, we also reject. One can, if he is careful with his data, make plausible generalizations from a few or from many. They are still inferences and their value lies with the quality of the data and the plausibility of the argument, not with the size of the group.

In this study, we selected two schools where in each a personal friend served as assistant principal. In fact, each of these individuals helped write the proposal, gather the needed permission from central office staff and teachers, and signed on as a co-researcher. Not only did these administrators help design the study and make the initial introductions, but each assisted in identifying key people and key issues, helped fill out details about significant events and, through daily discussions with the researcher, helped discuss and think through the study as it progressed. Although for obvious reasons neither did any actual research, these associations proved most advantageous and we would recommend it for a study which is similarly dependent on good will and personal relations. The researcher's daily routine was fairly simple. He attended some classes; associated with staff members in the lounge, the offices, the cafeteria; conducted formal interviews with almost every staff member in the school; and, in general, combined a mix of formal and informal associations. During all this time, he took copious notes and

gathered a great deal of background information all of which served as the basis of the description and explanatory model.

NOTES

[1]J.A. Barnes, "Class and Committee in a Norwegian Island Parish," Social Networks, A Developing Paradigm, ed. Samuel Leinhart (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 237.

[2]Edward J. Jay, "The Concept of 'Field' and 'Network' in Anthropological Research," MAN 177 (September-October 1964): 137-139.

[3]Samuel Leinhart, Social Networks, A Developing Paradigm (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. xxxi.

[4]H. White, S. Boorman and R. Breiger, "Social Structure from Multiple Networks," AJS 81 (January 1976): 732.

[5]John R.P. French, Jr. "A Formal Theory of Social Power," Psychological Review 63 (May 1956): 181

[6]J.A. Barnes, Social Networks, An Addison-Wesley Module in Anthropology, No. 26, 19[illegible], p. 2.

[7]Giving Youth a Better Chance, A Report with Recommendations, The Carnegie Council of Policy Studies in Higher Education (San Francisco, Jossy Bass, 1979) p. 24.

[8]Emile Durkheim, Moral Education, The Free Press, 1961, New York, p. xi-xii.

[9]Mitchell, J. Clyde, ed. Social Networks in Urban Situtations, Manchester University Press, 1969.